

agriculture, for, if it is admitted that agriculture is the sustainer of the nations, it is important not to neglect it.

During the time of the war a pressing appeal was made to the farmer. He was asked to double his production and not to be afraid of hard work, be the weather fair or foul. All were asked to make an effort. An appeal was made to the patriotism of the people, and every one responded gladly.

The head of the family, the mother, the children left by the fireside after the departure of the older ones, whether for the front or the factory, set to work. Large tracts of land were ploughed and seeded; they feared neither the burning sun nor the rain; and, Heaven helping, the harvests were abundant. Carried over the seas, they served to nourish those who, on the field of honour, were valiantly sustaining the violent shock of a powerful enemy. The farmers, you will answer, were well rewarded by the prices which they received in return for their produce. That I admit. They admit it themselves. But what they cannot understand is that the price of their produce diminishes so considerably when all around them the price of manufactures changes so little. Farmers are forced to sell at low prices, but at the same time they are forced to pay a high price for the manufactured articles which they buy. Why is this reduction not uniform?

The manufacturers answer that that is due to the high cost of manual labour and the demands of the workmen. That may be, in certain isolated cases, but in many more is there not a reprehensible spirit of luxury? Through selfishness, they refuse to co-operate in the re-establishment of commercial equilibrium by consenting to the necessary sacrifices. If certain groups of workmen are intractable, it is because their employers have not always given them a good example. Exaggeration leads to exaggeration. The unreasonable desire of the employers for large profits has led their workers to demand large salaries.

Honourable gentlemen, the equilibrium must be re-established. The new Government promises to make an effort in this direction. Let us see to it that our farmers obtain the maximum of protection to which they legitimately aspire. We must help the Government to solve their urgent problem.

In the promised revision of the customs tariff it is to be hoped that the share of the farmers will be large and generous. Our agricultural commerce suffers in our

own markets, especially in our dairy products, very serious competition, and I commend the Government for its policy of opening new markets by agreements with other countries.

In 1910 the Laurier Government signed a reciprocal agreement with the United States concerning farm produce. There is no denying that this policy was very much to the advantage of the farmers. Well, what happened? Laurier appealed to the electors of this country and the question was rejected. They regretted it. This policy is now a fundamental part of the Liberal programme.

What is going to happen? Our chances of having the arrangement of 1911 with the United States revived are more than compromised by the Fordney Bill, which is the opposite of what we are asking for, and this time the opposition comes from the American farmers. That is why the Canadian Government will concentrate its energies and activities on finding other markets, if the United States persist in unwillingness to negotiate with us. The Government will not hesitate to do all that is possible to ameliorate the lot of the farmer. The prosperity of the country depends to a large extent on the prosperity of agriculture.

The Government informs us that it has been decided to hold conferences with the railway companies with the intention of bringing about a reduction in the rates of transport for Canadian products. That is a measure which is being taken, and the sooner it is realised the sooner it will help to ameliorate the lot of the farmer, especially in the dairy industry. Quite recently, at Winnipeg, the National Dairy Council of Canada, the members of which were assembled in convention, adopted resolutions in this sense for the third or fourth time.

One of the most powerful factors in agriculture is certainly the raising of animals from the point of view of the production of milk. The extraordinary number of businesses dependent upon this industry is conclusive proof of the interest which the farmers attach to it.

Like all other farm products, butter, cheese and other derivatives of milk have at present a deplorable market. Vigorous competition on the part of other British countries has just opened our eyes and brought us face to face with a problem fraught with serious consequences if we do not set to work immediately.